**Water Information and Data Subcommittee**

**Data Exchange Workgroup (Workgroup #4)**

Minutes – December 9, 2011

**Attendees**: Steve Tessler (USGS), Ruben Solis (TX), Dharhas Pothina (TX), Laura Paeglis (NE), Paul Houser (Reclamation)

**Next Call:** Week of January 23rd, look for a doodle poll

Following brief introductions from all of the workgroup members, we proceeded to follow the agenda:

**Review Project Purpose:** Dwane gave a brief overview of the Water Use Data Exchange Project. He discussed the role of the four workgroups. He also explained some of the Water Information and Data Subcommittee discussion on this project, particularly in regards to benefits and risks. Some of the benefits defined by the subcommittee include:

* States are struggling with the same issues of determining the best approach for determining water availability.
* States are struggling maintaining staff to support home-grown models. Need a more sustainable approach.
* Help states get ‘beyond their own boundaries’. Allow for better Regional collaboration.
* States are often bombarded with questions or requests for their data. By making the data available, in a common well-defined format, they can save time in dealing with multiple requests.
* Allow for better data comparisons between states and across state boundaries.
* Help answer National questions (as required by the Secure Water Act).
* Help in discussions with state legislators.

Some of the risks identified by the subcommittee include:

* Many states have different formats in place. We’ll need to consider how to best accommodate the work that the states have already done.
* Data can be used as both a ‘shield’ and a ‘weapon’.
* This will be a significant task to undertake. Although the WestFAST Liaison and WSWC staff will shoulder most of the work, it will require some commitment from state staff.

**Review Workgroup Purpose:** Dwane reviewed the purpose of the workgroup. This workgroup will evaluate the various technologies that can be used to establish a services-based data exchange. They will look at existing exchanges such as the Consortium for the Advancement of Hydrologic Sciences (CUAHSI) and the Exchange Network. Based on these evaluations, the workgroup will make recommendations to the Subcommittee on how best to implement a state-to-state and state-to-fed and fed-to-state data exchange. There was some question on the relationship between this workgroup and workgroup #3 (the data exchange template workgroup). Steve Tessler (USGS) explained it pretty well by stating that workgroup #3 would be defining the tables, and this workgroup would be defining how those tables get moved around. There was also some question about what types of data this workgroup would focus on. Would we focus on ‘Past’, ‘Present’, or ‘Future’ data? Dwane answered by stating that we’d look at historical and current water use and allocations, as well as including planning data, so the answer is that yes, we’d like to capture ‘Past’, ‘Present’, and ‘Future’ data.

Dharhas (TX) stated that TX has worked extensively with CUAHSI services and have learned a lot from that process. He recommended that whatever we develop be platform agnostic. He stated that they’ve had a number of issues with the CUAHSI tools because they are developed only for Windows. They have had a great deal of success in building platform agnostic tools that can provide services without having to be database specific. Dwane mentioned that for this project he was considering a ‘staging database’ approach. Dharhas said that TX tried that and found that it was more complicated than it needed to be. They developed a new approach that wouldn’t rely upon a staging database. Dwane said that he was very interested in what they came up with.

**Data Exchange Recommendations:** One of the deliverables under this workgroup is to develop recommendations for the Subcommittee on how best to implement this exchange. Dwane asked the group how they would like to go about doing this. It was asked if we could stand up a Wiki that everybody could access. Dwane said that he’d look into that. Another alternative would be to just use Google Docs. Everyone seemed fairly comfortable with that approach, but would like a more secure area where we could share files and documents with one another. In order to get the process started, Dwane said that he’d draft an initial “Issues Document” that outlined a number of the issues that we’ll need to consider in making our recommendations. This document will be posted to Google Docs and anybody can access it or make changes. Dwane said that he will look for a more secure storage area that we all could access. **Action Item: Dwane develop initial ‘Issues Document’ for Workgroup Review.**

**Workgroup Leadership:** Dwane expressed the need for a workgroup leader. His preference is that the workgroup leader be a state representative. The roles and responsibilities of this leader would be to lead calls, present findings to the Subcommittee, work with Dwane on project schedule adjustments or changes in direction, and provide general leadership for the workgroup. Dharhas Pothina (TX) agreed to be the workgroup leader.

**Call Schedules:** The group determined that the doodle poll approach to scheduling the call worked fairly well, and that we should follow that approach to schedule the next call. Dwane proposed the week of January 23rd. Dwane will send out a Doodle poll for times during that week.

**Other Items:**  It was requested that the powerpoints used during the meeting be made available via Google Docs. Dwane said that he would do that.